



# Working Paper

September 2009, n°8

## Democracy and Security: A Shotgun Marriage?

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### The argument

The relationship between democracy, security and development is at the heart of global liberal governance. It has been enshrined by the UN as a guiding principle of international cooperation<sup>1</sup>. At the same time it is hotly disputed. On the one hand by realists who argue that promotion of democracy conflicts with the requirements of security and unduly restrains the pursuit of national interest. On the other hand by radical critics who view it as an ideological fig-leaf for intervention by powerful international actors in the affairs of poor and vulnerable countries.

Are the critics right? Is the relationship between democracy and security a shotgun marriage in which (to adapt Hobbes) guns are trumps – and democracy (like development) is inexorably ‘securitised’? During the Cold War it used to be claimed that it was in the West’s enlightened self-interest to support both democracy and development in order to drain the swamp of discontent in troubled peripheries. The current instrumentalization of democracy as a solution to ‘political extremism’, ‘radical Islam’ and ‘terrorism’ is simply the latest twist in a tangled and murky tale.

This paper argues that these issues cannot be settled without a deeper interrogation of democracy on the one hand and of security on the other and of how they interconnect. Do they simply articulate different even if sometimes conflicting forms

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<sup>1</sup> Viz United Nations (2004):

of hegemony? Or can they voice the real concerns and interests of citizens, including those most vulnerable to poverty and insecurity?

It then situates these debates in the contested world of democratic transition, and 'post-conflict' peace-building. In particular it is asked why international promotion of democracy has so often failed to create viable democratic institutions, let establish liberal peace. It calls for a more nuanced understanding of the real politics of democratisation in particular national and regional contexts, including its many pitfalls.

### **Liberal Peace - Democracy and (In)Security**

The central conjecture of liberal peace, as already suggested, is that democracies are inherently better than other political systems at resolving violent conflicts between and within states. In the first place they pose a moral alternative to violence rooted in conceptions of human rights. Secondly democratic institutions create procedures and establish forums in which demands can be negotiated and conflicts resolved through the political process, without recourse to violence. Thirdly societies and groups, which share common democratic values, have less reason to go to war with each other. Fourth the impacts of political democratization tend to be reinforced by economic liberalization and global capitalist markets, which integrate economies in networks of inter-dependence, substituting trade for violence.

However, all of these remain at best plausible hypotheses rather than established truths, and remain open to dispute and debate<sup>2</sup>. There is strong empirical evidence that democracies do not go to war with each other. But the causal mechanisms remain unclear and are hard to disentangle from the particular historical matrix of post World-War II Western Europe and North America.

Moreover there is a sting in the tail – namely that democracies seem to have few inhibitions about going to war with non-democracies. Whether liberal peace will prevail in a world in which Western hegemony is increasingly challenged by the

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<sup>2</sup> Doyle (2005) provides a concise summary and defence of liberal peace theory.

emergence of new centres of global capitalism and political power like China, India or Brazil, is far from certain.

Moreover the jury remains out on whether democracies are better able than non-democratic systems to resolve conflicts within their own boundaries: the experience of Northern Ireland, Colombia, Mexico, Sri Lanka or India in Kashmir, Punjab and Gujerat among others seems to suggest otherwise.

Nor have Western democracies been consistent in their support for democracy in the developing world. Their own democratization was built on the foundations of populist imperialism and colonial expansion. After World War I the Wilsonian vision of a liberal world order sought to universalize democracy, but foundered on the rocks of economic depression and fascism. It was reinstated after World War II through the creation of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Since then Western powers have intervened militarily in the South in a number of shifting and inconsistent guises: as colonisers and occupiers; through support for 'democracy' against 'communism' during the Cold War; as backers of authoritarian as well as democratic regimes; as opponents or (when it suited them) supporters of nationalist or Islamist insurgencies; as peace-keepers, peace-enforcers and peace-builders; as guarantors of security in fragile or failing states under international trusteeship; and as enforcers and occupiers in the war on terror.

In sum one may tell two contrasting stories about the marriage between democracy and security, which is consecrated beneath the tattered banner of liberal peace (see Table 1 below). The first sees democracy as an alternative to violence; and violence and insecurity as threats to democracy. But it also sees security as potentially problematic when prioritized above democratic accountability and freedoms. Hence security is compatible with democracy only if public authority remains legitimate; if security institutions are under firm democratic control; if the security of citizens is the touchstone of state security; and if there is broad consensus about the norms governing the latter – all of which have to be organized not assumed by democratic governments.

According to the second story both democracy and security are contested and the relationship between them tends to be antagonistic. Liberal peace lends an illusory aura of respectability to security architectures constructed around military power and preservation of corporate wealth. Indeed security is unequally distributed between North and South, rich and poor, and this places it on a collision course with democracy. Rather than resolving the underlying conflicts of multiethnic societies, democratic contestation tends to awaken and aggravate them. When the international community launches humanitarian interventions to resolve such conflicts, protect civilians, rebuild states and establish democratic governance, it tends instead to establish new forms of imperialism.

**Table 1. Democracy and Security: Harmonious Partnership or Shotgun Marriage?**

Harmonious partnership	Shotgun marriage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal peace: common security is easier in a world of democracies.</li> <li>• 'Indivisibility of security, economic development and human freedom'.</li> <li>• Global security and national stability are preconditions for democracy.</li> <li>• Democratic institutions are a forum for peaceful resolution of conflicts.</li> <li>• Democracy assures <i>legitimate</i> public authority and hence security.</li> <li>• Democratic control prevents abuses by military and security establishments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal peace conceals deep global and national inequalities in wealth, power and security</li> <li>• Humanitarian intervention, 'the responsibility to protect' and the 'war on terrorism' open the door to new forms of imperialism</li> <li>• Dangers of 'securitization' of democracy and of development.</li> <li>• Premature democratization and elections polarize conflicts</li> <li>• Security may be invoked to reduce liberties and close democratic spaces</li> </ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human rights and freedoms protect against abuse of power and securitization</li><li>• Human security and democratic citizenship are mutually reinforcing.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Military and security role expansion occurs under the cloak of security</li><li>• Frictions between state, citizen and human security are endemic.</li></ul> |
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It is argued below is that these two accounts should not be seen as sharply posed alternatives, but rather as two interlinked narratives forming part of an unresolved conversation or argument about democracy and its relationships with security.

### **Democracy and Security: Essential yet Contested Concepts**

The conceptual fog around democracy is almost as dense as that swirling around security. Different definitions lead down divergent analytical and political paths. Both concepts are deeply disputed and contradictory. The propositions below spell out some of the controversies around each concept, and their implications for liberal peace.

#### **Seven Propositions about Democracy**

*1. Democracy is inherently value laden. It is founded on three mutually interdependent principles, namely (i) political participation and government by consent; (ii) political equality<sup>3</sup>; and (iii) universal citizen and human rights.*

Democratic values are open to dispute, reinterpretation and debate in different national, historical and cultural contexts. Yet they have universal appeal, speaking to

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<sup>3</sup> Beetham (1994) elegantly defines democracy in terms of the twin principles of participation and political equality. Universal citizen and human rights are added here both because they are important in their own right and since they are required to guarantee participation and political equality. There is of course a vast theoretical literature on democracy and the different ways of defining it. See in particular Held (1987), Dahl (1988), Luckham et al (2003) and Tilly (2007).

vast numbers of people in many different societies over centuries of history. They are inherently emancipatory and even sometimes subversive, encouraging citizens to challenge state power and hold rulers accountable. Democracy was a central demand of anti-colonial nationalism. It still animates popular struggles against despotic regimes to this day. Indeed much of the disillusion surrounding modern democracies stems from their perceived failure to match up to their own democratic principles – rather than rejection of democratic values per se.

Narrow procedural definitions of democracy (e.g. Przeworski's concise 'democracies are political systems in which governments lose elections'<sup>4</sup>) may lend themselves better to empirical analysis. But they tend to foreclose debate about whether and how far contemporary liberal democracies really are democratic.

It is true that citizens in modern democracies participate in governance and enjoy political equality largely in their capacity as voters. But there is far less participation and virtually no political equality when it comes to determining policy, influencing decisions and shaping political outcomes - all of them heavily biased towards the holders of corporate wealth, media influence, bureaucratic position and political power.

Thus there is a glaring contradiction at the heart of liberal democracy between formal electoral participation and equality on the one hand and de facto disempowerment and inequality on the other. Existing liberal democracies are in need of democratization, as well as the authoritarian systems they have been sweeping aside.

*2. In its modern form democracy is hegemonic and deeply conditioned by Western history, global capitalism and military power.*

Parekh insists on the 'cultural particularity of liberal democracy', arguing that its emergence in Europe was preceded and deeply conditioned by early capitalism, liberalism and the limited state<sup>5</sup>. Tilly suggests that the industrialization of war,

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<sup>4</sup> Przeworski (1991)

<sup>5</sup> Parekh (1993)

state-building and imperial expansion were all linked to the emergence of modern democracies<sup>6</sup>. They required the assent of middle class taxpayers and the industrial working class, who were mobilized into politics and began pressing demands on the state. An influential strand in democratic theory sees electoral democracy and the capitalist marketplace as mutually reinforcing; some theorists indeed suggesting that inequality is required for party systems to function.<sup>7</sup>

Hence there has always been a tension between electoral democracy and progressive politics. The popular gains of working class politics, popular movements and social democracy<sup>8</sup> began to be eroded almost as soon as they were achieved. The modern story of democracy has witnessed the fragmentation of progressive movements and political parties, the transformation of democratic politics into public relations and the de facto hegemony of corporate capitalism and large bureaucracies, including security establishments. But far from making democracy irrelevant, the emergence of new forms of hegemony make it all the more important that it should be revitalized and reinvented for the twenty-first century.

*3. Electoral democracy, in which political parties compete for votes, is the political counterpart of capitalist competition, and at the same time in deep tension with it. Money politics, corruption, inequality and even violence are not simply externalities but tend to arise from democratic contestation itself.*

This tension is manifested in a number of ways. Market liberalism tends to elevate the choices of consumers and firms over those of voters and elected governments. The scope for democratic choice is narrowed by governments' inability or unwillingness to regulate the market and confront corporate and media power. In developing countries the room for maneuver is even less, as many of the most fundamental decisions are left to markets or dictated by donors and international financial institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> Tilly (1985)

<sup>7</sup> Przeworski *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> The historic centrality of progressive working class politics in deepening democracy is argued in Rueschemeyer et al (1991).



Moreover competition for the vote requires political machines and finance (as noted by political analysts since the time of Weber and Michels)<sup>9</sup>. The dominant forms of party organization in Western democracies tend to be oligarchic, developing symbiotic relationships with the media and corporate capitalism.

In new democracies political competition tends to be even more lightly regulated and patronage politics reflect what one prominent analyst of African politics calls the ‘politics of the belly’<sup>10</sup>. When parties are largely financed through corruption, the rules of democratic competition are loose and the costs of losing elections are high, it is hardly surprising that elections become contentious and sometimes violent. ‘A violence called democracy’ is the dominant reality in all too many cases<sup>11</sup>.

*4. Democracies almost invariably fall short of their own standards and face deep democracy deficits, notably where security is concerned.*

When authoritarianism was the dominant form of governance in most of the developing world Sklar argued that democracy might nevertheless exist ‘in parts’ within the limited political spaces available in the interstices of autocratic regimes – and could become the starting point for protest movements and ultimately democratic transition<sup>12</sup>.

The converse also applies: even established democracies remain at best only democracies in parts. Democratic institutions are riddled with democratic deficits and lend a veneer of legitimacy to state and corporate hierarchies, which have limited interest in accountability and transparency.<sup>13</sup> Security apparatuses tend to be especially resistant to democratic oversight; as well as penetrating deep into civil society. The current proliferation of surveillance technologies and limitations on

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<sup>9</sup> Weber (1921); Michels (1962); Held (1987: chapter 5) analyses the influence of both thinkers on the ‘competitive elitism’ of Western liberal democracy.

<sup>10</sup> Bayart (1993)

<sup>11</sup> The phrase comes from Schirmer’s (2000) analysis of the vicissitudes of military-dominated democratization in Guatemala.

<sup>12</sup> See Sklar (1987)

<sup>13</sup> On democracy deficits see Luckham et al 2003: 24-8.



civil rights introduced in Western democracies in response to political 'radicalisation' and terrorism are part of such a tendency.

The real world of democracy is peopled by democracies with greatly varying credentials. Political scientists use the term 'democracy with adjectives' to characterise these hybrid forms of governance: 'pseudo-democracy', 'semi-democracy', 'low-intensity democracy', 'illiberal democracy' 'sovereign democracy', 'nomenclatura democracy' 'anocracy' are some of the terms which have been used<sup>14</sup>. Even qualifying terms like 'liberal', 'electoral', 'multi-party' or 'participatory' democracy, also reflect the complexity of democracy and the controversies surrounding it.

Clearly not all democratic transitions fit the same analytical mould; and not all result in functioning democracies. Some, as we shall see later, are the largely creatures of Western democracy promotion agendas; others have arisen from internal struggles for democratic participation. Such distinctions should be the starting point for more informed analysis of the democracy deficits in particular national contexts, as well as of the spaces which exist or can be opened for political change.

*5. 'The democratization of democracy' is invariably work in progress, depending upon the mutual interplay of democratic institutions and democratic politics.*

Political watersheds such as the 'peoples power' revolution in the Philippines, transition from apartheid in South Africa and the electoral victories of Lula in Brazil and Obama in the USA remind us that citizen activism and participation can shift the direction of national politics, sometimes fundamentally. Yet the democratic gains secured at such critical conjunctures seldom live up to expectations. In the long haul democratic institutions are needed to assure accountable and effective governance – and sometimes indeed to restrain attacks on civil liberties by elected politicians in countries like Italy, Venezuela or Sri Lanka, not to mention the United States and the UK.

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<sup>14</sup> See Collier and Levitsky (1997) and Ottaway (2003).

Neither democratic institutions nor elections can guarantee democracy without active citizenship, well-organized political parties, a vital civil society and independent and critical media. Democratic politics must articulate some conception of a public sphere, in which voting and citizen participation can make a real difference to political outcomes. A modicum of social equity is necessary to ensure substantive as well as purely formal political equality.

Most liberal democracies have the utmost difficulty living up to these requirements. Hence participatory democracy has sometimes been posed as an alternative, as in Sandinista Nicaragua or Tanzania under Julius Nyerere<sup>15</sup>. Neither of these experiments was sustainable, in part due to external destabilization, and in part because of their internal flaws. Yet their failure does not diminish the case for participatory democracy - which remains an important area of academic enquiry, as well as being a powerful inspiration for activist politics. Rather than being posed as an alternative form of governance in its own right, participatory democracy tends now to be seen as a way of democratizing liberal democracy itself – deepening the latter and of expanding the spaces for political participation within it. This is of course a veritable task of Sisyphus, demanding constant democratic struggles.

Democratic struggles are equally if not more salient in authoritarian and quasi-authoritarian regimes, even where they run up against walls of obstruction as in Zimbabwe, Burma or Iran. Such countries are democracies in the sense that they have many active citizens prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the sake of their rights and liberties. Arguably they are even more democratic in this regard than many established democracies, where citizens fail to participate or take their liberties for granted. But it is their institutions as well as their regimes, which are undemocratic - enabling regimes to actively resist democratic accountability and crush citizen participation.

Not all forms of politics, even those, which raise the banner of democracy, are democratic - and some may be violent. Party politics (even in Western societies) is often corrupt and divisive. Civil society seldom fits romanticized stereotypes. The

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<sup>15</sup> See Luckham (1998) on the tensions between participatory and liberal democracy in these two countries and their ultimate inability to develop sustainable alternatives to liberal democracy.

potential ambiguities of citizen participation are illustrated by the recent (2008-9) street protests and blockades by 'yellow shirt' and 'red shirt' demonstrators supporting government and opposition parties in Thailand. Should these be seen as instances of effective civic action in the face of unresponsive and non-accountable governments? Or as factional struggles by organized groups attempting to close political spaces to others and subvert democratic institutions?

Those resorting to violence sometimes claim democratic credentials when they confront an oppressive state, enjoy popular legitimacy, or enable participation by disempowered citizens – like the liberation struggles in Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Africa or the Maoist rebellion in Nepal. But one crucial litmus test of their claim to be 'democratic' is whether they have exhausted alternative ways of pursuing democratic struggles through the political process. Another is whether they are capable of transcending the exclusionary legacies of violence once liberation is achieved, rather than erecting new forms of despotism, as in Eritrea.

*6. Democratic citizenship incorporates imagined national communities. Nationalism is inherent and its relationship to democracy is problematic.*

All contemporary democracies are organized within national territorial spaces. Nationalism is inscribed into democratic citizenship, although there are many different ways in which national political communities are imagined. Some tend to be more exclusive than others, for instance if citizenship is defined in terms of shared descent or religion rather than residence and civic rights. Common citizenship tends to be especially fragile and contested in multiethnic states, especially those with major 'horizontal inequalities' among national, ethnic or religious groups.

It is hardly surprising that democratization should politicize such divisions and reinforce the insecurities associated with them. A substantial empirical literature analyses how electoral contestation politicizes identities and fosters identity-based violence<sup>16</sup>. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that democratization can awaken ethnic and nationalist conflict. Added to this it may also foster intolerance of non-citizens:

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<sup>16</sup> Snyder (2000); Collier (2009: chapters 1-3).

immigrants, refugees or excluded minorities like Roma in Eastern Europe<sup>17</sup> – exposing tensions between national citizenship and wider conceptions of human rights. The dark side of democracy may be ethnic cleansing and even genocidal violence<sup>18</sup>.

Yet democracies do not have a monopoly on extreme nationalism or ethnic politics. Far from it. Autocracies are sometimes more successful in suppressing overt manifestations of ethnic politics, often brutally. But they tend to develop their own less visible ways of manipulating ethnic divisions and targeting dissident minorities as security threats. When political liberalization brings suppressed cleavages into the open, they tend to be all the more virulent for having been previously forced underground. To blame the resurgence of ethnic nationalism and religious fundamentalism on democratization demonstrates a certain lack of historical perspective.

Hence the relationship between democratization and identity-based conflict is neither inevitable nor irreversible. There is body of analysis, which suggests that democratic institutions, including voting systems, can be designed to reduce ethnic etc polarization and reduce the likelihood of it turning violent. Its findings are far from conclusive<sup>19</sup>. Indeed ‘designer democracy’ can sometimes have perverse effects, sharpening rather than resolving underlying conflicts, as in Fiji<sup>20</sup>. Democratic institutions cannot resolve conflicts unless supported by extensive investment in less divisive forms of democratic politics.

*7. Democracy and universal human rights are woven into the entire fabric of global governance and liberal peace. Yet the globalization of democracy is increasingly contested and problematic.*

The making of liberal peace and of a rules-based international order has been difficult and protracted. Even though democracy and human rights were installed as

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<sup>17</sup> Roma are of course citizens but not perceived as such by many of their fellow citizens.

<sup>18</sup> The perverse relationship between democracy and ethnic cleansing is explored by Mann (2005)

<sup>19</sup> See Luckham et al (2003), pp 37-51 for an overview.

<sup>20</sup> Fraenkel (2003).

global norms under the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights they have been applied selectively – not least by Western democracies in their dealings with the developing South<sup>21</sup>. Transitions to democracy before the end of the Cold War in countries like Spain, the Philippines, South Korea, Chile or Brazil indeed went somewhat against the grain by bringing down dictatorships, which had previously received support from the West. Whilst Western powers did not necessarily oppose democratization, they did not actively promote it either, the principal drivers of change being largely internal.

It is only since the end of the Cold War that Western democracies have become active in promoting democracy and liberal peace in the South and East. The central paradox has been that they have done so at a time when the limitations of liberal democracy have become ever more apparent in Western democracies themselves and in the international community. The institutions of the UN, World Bank, IMF, NATO, the EU etc are far from outstanding paradigms of accountable governance themselves<sup>22</sup>.

Democracy-promotion, especially by force, is an oxymoron<sup>23</sup>; and tends to be especially problematic when harnessed to security priorities. Democracy is far more likely to take root when it is the product of vigorous internal struggles for democracy and human rights rather than of external imposition. This does not mean there is no role for international support of legitimate and locally supported democratic transitions. But is preferable that democracy should emerge of its own accord and its own pace, not one dictated by Western proselytizers of liberal peace.

## **Seven Propositions about Security**

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<sup>21</sup> Sands' (2005) excellent account of the making of the international legal order identifies its many shortcomings – but argues that substantial progress has nevertheless been made toward a rules-based international order.

<sup>22</sup> On democratic deficits and mechanisms of accountability in international politics, see Grant and Keohane (2005).

<sup>23</sup> Von Hippel (2000)

*1. Security is a socially (and politically) constructed concept with multiple discursive registers. It is a discourse of risk-avoidance and fear rather than a language of emancipation. The crucial questions are who talks security? Whose security? And from what threats or risks?*<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to democracy, which is unequivocally an Enlightenment narrative, security is trapped uneasily between the Enlightenment and neo-medieval narratives of war and violence<sup>25</sup>. 'Security' is often used on its own, as if self-evidently tangible. Yet invariably it has to be fleshed out with descriptors. Who talks security, the security of what or whom (the international community, the state, citizens, human beings?) and from what threats is often left implicit. But it has to be contextualized in order to make sense. Indeed security is often defined in contrast to what it is not: i.e. the absence of violence and other forms of risk; negative rather than positive peace.

The highly stratified nature of the international system and of the states within it makes it all the more important to be specific about whose security is in question. On the one hand security is a global and national public good, in which all states and their citizens have a stake. On the other hand its intimate connections to violence, power and social regulation mean it is not and cannot be distributed equally. Hence it is in permanent tension with democracy.

Almost endless lists of threats and risks have been constructed: wars, ethnic conflicts, nuclear proliferation, rogue states, terrorism, transnational crime, HIV/AIDS, climate change and so forth. What unites these diverse issues is how they are 'securitized': i.e. singled out as existential risks demanding the urgent attention of states and the international community<sup>26</sup>. Even when couched in the discourse of human rather than state security, they tend to evoke the language of threat and fear historically associated with state security – rather than alternative languages of peace, cooperation and solidarity.

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<sup>24</sup> See the important tradition of critical security studies, notably the studies in Krause and Williams (1997) and Booth (2005).

<sup>25</sup> Cerny (1998).

<sup>26</sup> Buzan et al (1998)

*2. Security carries heavy Hobbesian historical baggage: that of state sovereignty constructed around monopolies of force. This remains enormously powerful, yet is deeply problematic and increasingly challenged.*

The theory and practice of security has been and still largely remains a sovereign narrative of power, as seen by states, rather than constructed from below through the participation of citizens. State authority backed up by violence (Weber's 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory') remains at its very core.<sup>27</sup>

Yet in a globalised world military force tends to be a diminishing asset, even in the hands of a superpower like the United States. State authority is exercised in tandem with many hybrid forms of power, some working through the state, some networked around it, others undermining or challenging it. Even in the more established states key security matters are determined not only by governments, but also by global markets and financial institutions, the media, international firms and even criminal mafia (as in the 'war on drugs').

In 'fragile' states, formal sovereignties and monopolies of force have crumbled, eroded internally by political and criminal violence and externally through the spread of insecurity across national borders. Nevertheless international policy responses to state fragility still tend to endorse state-centered conceptions of security. Post-conflict 'state-building' has tended to prioritize the restoration of the traditional attributes of state power: capacity to tax, to administer, to assure law and order and to assure external and internal security.

Deep issues persist around the entire Weberian vision of state security constructed around force and surveillance. Military regimes have largely (but not entirely)

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<sup>27</sup> Weber's (1921: 77-8) characterization of the state remains (though much criticized) central to the theory and practice of statecraft. It is what Foucault (1980) terms a 'sovereign' narratives of power (hence security) from the top, contrasting it with 'capillary' narratives, seeing power as rooted at all levels of society. Scott's critique of "seeing like a state" is pertinent to humanitarian intervention and state-building as well as to development.



vanished from the developing world. But security institutions remain powerful in many new democracies, even if their power has been invisible-ized, often behind walls of secrecy. How to control these institutions, and assure they are accountable and respect the rule of law, is difficult even in stable democracies, let alone in new democracies or post-conflict states.

*3. Security straddles war and peace, violence and non-violence, which should be seen as interrelated rather than mutually exclusive<sup>28</sup>.*

Both realist and critical security studies have questioned the dichotomy between war and peace, violence and non-violence, but for entirely different reasons. For realists the central concern of security policy has been how states can protect themselves from aggression and assure peace and security, if necessary through force or the threat to use it; as epitomized in the old saw 'if you want peace, prepare for war'. Yet they also recognized that military competition between states (and alliances) creates the very insecurity it is designed to avoid: the so-called 'security dilemma', which was at the crux of nuclear deterrence and arms control during the Cold War.

Realists were unsettled by the end of the Cold War. Some heralded the arrival of the United States as an unchallenged superpower able to translate its immense military power into durable influence as the protector of the liberal peace - a vision, which collided disastrously with reality in Iraq and Afghanistan. Others remained more cautious, warning against Western intervention in the complex conflicts of the developing world, which were best left to play themselves out: 'give war a chance' was the cynical mantra of a leading Washington exponent<sup>29</sup>. There has been a distinct shift toward the latter school of thought under the 'stabilization' or 'security first' paradigms now being applied in Iraq and Afghanistan, which sideline democratization and political reform.

Critical analysts likewise have argued that war and peace are not polar opposites, but intimately connected. They dispute the narrative, which underpins

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<sup>28</sup> This point is well made by Keen (2008: chapter 1 'War').

<sup>29</sup> Luttwak (1999).

humanitarian intervention, according to which the ‘new wars’ of the post-Cold War era are regressive and destructive of development. War and violence are normal and not necessarily pathological; they may even be ‘sites of social innovation’<sup>30</sup>, as in societies stifled by neo-patrimonial rule or imperial violence. They also dispute the case for liberal peace: not only because it legitimizes Western interventions; but also for being hegemonic in its own right.

*4. Security fuses both the outer and the inner gaze of the state. It is constructed at multiple levels from global to national to local.*

Security analysis traditionally focused largely on international relations. States were the main units of analysis; they existed in a condition of international anarchy; and the issue was how they could assure security through international cooperation, power balances, deterrence etc. Yet there was a less visible subtext of internal social control, which cropped up in Western democracies in a variety of guises: anti-communism, mistrust of organized labour, or surveillance of protest movements etc.

In most developing countries in contrast, internal and especially regime security has been the main preoccupation of governments and security decision-makers. Nevertheless internal security has often been perceived through the lenses of hegemonic ideologies: as in the anti-communist national security doctrines of many Latin American and Asian military regimes during the Cold War; or more recently through the profound impacts of the wars against terror and organized crime on security perceptions in countries like Colombia, Indonesia or Ethiopia.

Increasingly the security of states (and of the people who live in them) has become hostage to factors and agents over which they have limited if any control: global markets and financial insecurity; climate change and resource scarcities; commerce in conflict resources, arms and military services; flows of combatants and refugees across national boundaries; interventions by major powers, international bodies and neighboring states; networked diasporas and terrorists; peace-keepers, humanitarian agencies and NGOs. The very idea of an overarching state, providing

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<sup>30</sup> Duffield (2001: )

defence against external aggression and public order and social regulation within national borders, has come increasingly in question.

Even military insecurity no longer takes the traditional forms, and has had to be re-thought: in terms for instance of 'asymmetric warfare' in which technology and firepower are neutralized at local levels by more flexible and decentralized ways of fighting; or of 'network wars' linked across different global, national and local spaces; or of 'regional security complexes' with regions and localities rather than states as the major unit of analysis.

The 'multilevel governance of security' is one way of characterizing this situation. States are not irrelevant, but their capacities to deliver security, law and order vary greatly and even in the case of the most powerful states are shared with many other organizations and bodies.

This raises acute problems for democratic governance. If states have little influence over the factors determining security and insecurity, who then can be held accountable, for what and by whom? Can and should the international community stand in for absent, ineffective or unresponsive states? Who speaks for the international community and are they any better able to regulate or reduce the main sources of insecurity? How can they be held to account, given the well-known accountability deficits of the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions, international NGOs and other institutions of global governance<sup>31</sup>?

*5. Security is widely represented as a public good: i.e. 'international', 'collective' or 'common security' globally; 'regional security'; and 'national' and 'public security' within states. Yet it is also inherently hegemonic, tending to stabilize inequalities in power and wealth, globally, regionally and nationally.*

In principle security is not divisible. It advances a vision of common security against shared threats. It belongs in the public sphere and is not tradable in the market. Thus it requires collective action: by states acting on behalf of their citizens; or by the international community inspired by some wider conception of humankind.

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<sup>31</sup> Grant and Keohane op. cit.

Yet the problems of collective action are enormously difficult to resolve not least in a democratic framework, still more internationally. Moreover normative constructions of security as a public good emerged from a particular historical and ideological context. They remain in various ways politically contested. And like many other public goods, security has increasingly been privatized.

The security architecture established under the UN Charter both established a framework for international cooperation and drew explicitly on the norms and ideals of the universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same time it was constructed around the principles of non-intervention and the protection of national sovereignties. It thus reflected the underlying tensions between international and national security. The UN Security Council represented an uneasy compromise between collective security and vast international disparities in wealth and power – in effect enabling the major powers to call the shots on behalf of the international community.

Consensus around international norms remains fragile and is not always matched by serious commitment to international cooperation. Since the end of the Cold war the UN has shifted decisively from limited peacekeeping and conflict prevention to more robust conflict resolution, peace enforcement and peace-building. But how far this has tangibly reduced conflict and insecurity remains open to debate, as discussed later in this chapter. Moreover, the emergence of liberal peace has been overshadowed by the ‘war on terror’ and the interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Chechnya, Georgia etc - driven by the security priorities of major powers and alliances rather than any more widely shared consensus about international peace and security.

*6. Security like democracy tends to be imagined and structured around national, regional, religious and ethnic identities, which may themselves become sources of insecurity*

National security is hard to disentangle from the imagined communities given political form in nation-states<sup>32</sup>. Nationalism in one guise or another is built into security narratives, and is further complicated where such nationalism draws on the cultural repertoires of regional (e.g. Pan-African), religious (e.g. Christian, Buddhist or Islamic) or ethnic (e.g. Croatian, Sinhala or Hindu) identities.

Whilst national security and imagined national identities are interrelated they also tend to be in deep tension, especially in multicultural societies. 'Horizontal inequalities<sup>33</sup>' between different identity groups are a major source of insecurity, with ethnic, religious etc signifiers used to mobilize people and groups into violence.

What is less often noted is how states and their security apparatuses often deploy markers of identity as tools of security management and political control. In colonial times they recruited from allegedly 'martial races' like the Ghurkas, still recruited into the British armed forces. Authoritarian regimes often recruit their military and security apparatuses from particular clans, sects and ethnic groups connected to the ruling elite. Security services of both democracies and autocracies continue to single out particular groups (Moslems, Tamils, Uighurs, Roma etc) for surveillance, or to regard their rights as less worthy of protection than other citizens.

Such practices tend to embed ethnic conflict and potentially violence deep in the heart of the state and its governing elites as well as within civil society. They also have corrosive effects on the construction of nationality and democratic citizenship in multi-ethnic societies, particularly where (as in Sri Lanka) the social imaginary of the nation-state privileges markers of identity associated with the majority over others.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Enloe (1980) remains the most perceptive analysis of the imagination of security through ethnic narratives, especially in colonial and post-colonial settings.

<sup>33</sup> Stewart (2008).

<sup>34</sup> See the insightful analysis by De Mel (2009) of the privileged place of Sinhala identity in the social imaginary of the Sri Lankan state and its role in the conflict. One is also reminded of controversies over alleged cultural markers of 'Britishness', such as the infamous 'cricket test'.

*7. State-centered conceptions of security are challenged by discourses of citizen and human security, in turn closely drawing on ideas of democracy, development, human rights and liberal peace<sup>35</sup>. But even state security implies that the state has a contract with citizens as well as obligations to the international community. In sum state security and citizen and human security are mutually supporting as well as mutually opposed.*

The discursive shift from state-centered to 'human' or 'citizen' security has coincided with the erosion of the conventional attributes of statehood by globalised markets and new forms of risk. It has become increasingly apparent that global challenges like climate change, health pandemics or nuclear proliferation threaten all human beings and cannot be managed by states acting on their own - nor even by cooperation solely among states.

The emergence of human security also reflects the failure of many states to ensure the physical safety of their own citizens in situations of violence. Indeed in the worst cases it has become apparent that states are agents of insecurity, rights violations and human misery in their own right – as in countries like Burma, Zimbabwe or North Korea. Even the governments of relatively legitimate and well-established states, like Brazil, China, India or the UK, may not sufficiently protect the security and rights of their more marginalized citizens, not to speak of immigrants and refugees.

Human and citizen security draw on the discourses of human rights, citizenship and democracy. They do not replace state security, but rather provide a language and criteria to interrogate whether states actually protect the safety and rights of their citizens. As well they provide criteria to evaluate the international community's

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<sup>35</sup> It was indeed a major development agency, the UNDP, which first popularized the idea of human security through its Human Development Reports from 1994. On the concept and the debates it has stimulated see Commission on Human Security (2003), Jolly and Basu Ray (2007), Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007). The Commission on Human Security explicitly makes the connection to democracy and human rights.

responses to the existential risks facing all human beings - including those arising from oppressive or failing states.

It is precisely for this reason that human security has become such a controversial concept. Much of the controversy has focused not on human security itself, but on the principle of the international community's 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) vulnerable groups not adequately protected by their own states,<sup>36</sup>. Supporters of the principle argue that the sovereign independence of states recognized under the UN Charter and protected by international law is not absolute but comes with obligations towards citizens. The international community cannot stand by when governments commit or encourage large-scale violence against their own citizens (as during the Rwandan genocide or in Darfur); or even when they ignore natural catastrophes engulfing their own citizens, as in the aftermath of the recent typhoon in Burma. The 'responsibility to protect' codifies and arguably extends current humanitarian practice – whilst spelling out strict criteria defining the circumstances in which humanitarian intervention is and is not appropriate. It does not create an unrestricted right to intervene.

Nevertheless many Southern governments have expressed deep reservations the 'responsibility to protect' – arguing that it opens the door to intervention, undermines hard-won national independence and threatens their national security. Oppressive and failing regimes have another less openly acknowledged anxiety: that R2P could expose and deepen the rift between them and the citizens they are failing to protect.

These concerns are echoed in academic critiques of the new humanitarianism<sup>37</sup>. Western governments, they argue, make selective use of human rights and human security, to legitimize interventions supporting their own security and economic interests. These interventions shade subtly into intrusive engagement by a wide range of other international actors (the UN, IFIs, donors, humanitarian agencies,

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<sup>36</sup> Elaborated by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS 2001) and subsequently endorsed by the UN.

<sup>37</sup> Duffield (2001), Chandler (2006: chapter 1) extends the critique to democratization, human rights, civil society and a range of other concepts used by Western states and international institutions "to deny the power they wield and evade the responsibility for its exercise".



international NGOs etc) in the affairs of conflict-affected states. Human security tends to be especially open to abuse, as it easily leads to the labeling of rights abuses, poverty, disease or environmental degradation as 'security' issues.

These critiques have considerable force. Yet they tend to discount the subversive potential of human security. Not only does it provide civil society or human rights groups with critical analytical and policy tools with which to hold governments in Western as well as developing countries to account. The same critical tools can be turned on global corporations, IFIs and other powerful international actors. In the Niger Delta, for instance, community activists made skilful use of connections with international media, environmental and human rights groups to mount an effective campaign secure redress for the environmental damage and human rights abuses caused by oil corporations in collusion with the Nigerian federal government<sup>38</sup>.

One can only imagine the international furor were independent human security audits to be carried out on all actors (including the internationals) in Darfur or the Eastern DRC. Or the consternation were the UN apply the full rigors of the 'responsibility to protect' in an assessment of international intervention forces as well as local military actors in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is one thing to criticize Western powers and the international community for double standards in their application of humanitarian and human rights principles. It is quite another to argue that the principles themselves are hegemonic. Any 'grand narrative' claiming individuals have universal entitlements as human beings is open to the charge of disregarding cultural or religious sensitivities (for example over women's rights or the boundaries between religion and politics). But cultural and religious norms are open to different constructions; these can reaffirm as well as clash with universal standards. Without such standards there would be no basis for opposing global or national injustice and violence; nor for international cooperation to meet the global challenges facing all human beings.

## **The Real (and Highly Contested) World of Democratic Transition**

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<sup>38</sup> See Watts (2004) and Ibeanu and Luckham (2007)

Why has democratisation so often failed to consolidate democracy, still less bring an end to violence and insecurity? To understand this question one must first reassess the jagged wave of democratic transitions, which swept across the South and East from the 1980s, coinciding with and in some cases resulting from the end of the Cold War<sup>39</sup>. Even if these appeared to herald massive transformations in national and global governance, the reality was less triumphal and more contradictory.

A number of democratic transitions were achieved by hard-fought popular struggles against the authoritarian and communist regimes of the period. The political changes they introduced were significant. Both military regimes and communist autocracies were swept away. Military coups became less frequent, despite their occasional reappearance countries like Fiji, Thailand, Mauritania, Madagascar, Bangladesh or Honduras.

To be sure, the transitions were not always in reality to democracy. Some were merely to new forms of authoritarianism. Others brought armed conflict and state failure in their wake, as in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. But even non-democratic regimes are routinely obliged to redecorate autocracy in the trappings of liberal democracy. The major exceptions, like Burma or North Korea, increasingly appear like toxic flotsam left behind by an advancing democratic tide.

Yet the earlier optimism about the spread of democracy, still more about its efficacy as a panacea for violent conflict, has proved misplaced. Political and criminal violence (or both interacting) remain major facts of political life in many countries, which have made 'successful' transitions to competitive multi-party politics, like the Philippines, Thailand, El Salvador, Peru, Bolivia, Senegal, Kenya or South Africa.

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<sup>39</sup> See Luckham and White (1996) Introduction, for a critical assessment of the democratic triumphalism that prevailed after the end of the Cold War.

Not has the advent of democracy necessarily swept away the previous authoritarian and security elites. Sometimes the latter have developed their own subtle ways of shaping political outcomes and closing down political spaces, often in defiance of the international community<sup>40</sup>. Military elites in former military dictatorships like South Korea, Indonesia, Chile or Guatemala have fought rearguard actions to preserve professional and political prerogatives. In Thailand, Nigeria and other countries formerly under military rule, ex-military elites have moved en masse into the political and business classes. In former communist states, like Russia, ex-nomenclatura and securocrats have proved highly adept at reinventing themselves as putative democrats. Even in longer-standing democracies, security and intelligence bureaucracies have enhanced their influence, notably in countries facing armed insurgencies like Sri Lanka, Colombia or even India.

In this shadowy world of unresolved transition wholesale promotion of democracy as a solution to conflict is unrealistic. Firstly, as argued earlier, it is based on faulty analysis of how democracies actually function.

Secondly, protracted violence tends to distort democratic institutions and reduce their capacity to assure security. Even legitimate and capable states like the post-apartheid regime in South Africa face enormous difficulties reversing legacies of violence such as ethnic polarisation, social exclusion, and criminalised informal economies, which tend to persist long after the end of hostilities. The difficulties are even more severe when governments or state legitimacy is seriously contested, as in Pakistan, or where the state is simply unable to govern as with the DRC. The problems tend to be compounded when violence, small arms, conflict resources, combatants, refugees, drugs etc, spill over national borders, as in many conflict-torn countries.

Thirdly, it is unrealistic to expect democratization to resolve violent conflicts, when it may itself have fanned the embers of conflict. Cross-national studies indicate an inverted u relationship between democracy and political violence. Stable autocracies as well as consolidated democracies tend to be more peaceful than

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<sup>40</sup> See Ottaway (2003).

countries still in transition to democracy<sup>41</sup>. Moreover electoral competition itself tends to waken latent national and ethnic identities, hence arousing rather than dampening political violence<sup>42</sup>.

Democratic reforms tend to be opposed, often violently, by those who would loose from them, whether these be authoritarian elites, political parties or armed factions etc. The political war of attrition waged by President Mugabe and his cronies to stall democratic transition in Zimbabwe is a particularly vivid example. Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement too for long remained hostage to the systematic non-implementation of democratic reforms, notably but not solely in the North.

But whilst there is little doubt but that incomplete or stalled democracy increases the risk of political violence, this is not a convincing objection to democratization itself. Indeed the responsibility lies with those who use violence close political spaces, undermine rights and manipulate or subvert elections - that is with the opponents of democracy and not with its supporters.

Yet those who promote democracy, especially from outside, cannot escape some share of the responsibility. Some regard political violence as a product of bad or inconsistent policy choices about the sequencing of democratic and war-to-peace transitions, including premature liberalization without prior state and institution-building<sup>43</sup>. Others hold that democratic institutions themselves may aggravate conflicts, notably under majoritarian winner-takes-all systems. They suggest that the risks of political violence can be minimized if democratic institutions are redesigned to foster more inclusive, less confrontational, forms of politics<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Henderson and Singer (2000).

<sup>42</sup> See the empirical sources cited in n.16.

<sup>43</sup> This is the argument popularised by Paris (2004).

Prevailing approaches to the promotion and design of democracy, however, tend to be excessively reliant on policy fixes, privileging the high politics of democratic institution-building over the deep politics of democratisation. They often neglect historical context, political culture and alternative forms of democratic practice, especially in non-western countries. And to a large extent they discount the role political violence itself may play in delegitimizing and bringing down authoritarian regimes.

### **Liberal Peace and Democratic Strategies for Security in Post-conflict States**

This chapter has argued that democracy and conceptions of liberal peace inspired by democracy are elusive, contested and do not offer universal panaceas for violent conflict. That does not mean, however, that democracy and liberal peace are not worth pursuing in their own right. Nor does it mean that they *cannot* create credible political alternatives to violence; just that their capacity to do so must be demonstrated case by case, and not assumed a priori.

Indeed it remains essential that modern democracies find ways of minimising violence and dealing with its legacies. Many have themselves emerged from war and political violence. According to Nancy Bermeo approximately half of all “free” regimes formed after World War II were formed in the immediate aftermath of war<sup>45</sup>. War-to-peace transitions have almost invariably built democratic constitutions, free elections, human rights and the rule of law into peace agreements or made them part of the wider post-conflict settlement.

*Democratic strategies for security* are essential<sup>46</sup>, yet must take account of the immense variations in war-to-peace transitions and their political outcomes. In

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<sup>44</sup> Luckham et al (2003) pp37-51 critically review the case for the conflict-resolution in plural societies by means of ‘consociationalist’ and other power-sharing forms of democracy made by Arend Lijphart and others democratic theorists.

<sup>45</sup> Bermeo, (2003).

some post-conflict countries, like South Africa or Mozambique, democracy appears to have taken root, and violence has been largely if not entirely brought under control. In many others democratization has stalled, or conflicts have reignited, or both at the same time.

Recent comparative statistical analysis suggests that the chances of durable peace and democratization have been higher when civil wars have come to an end through the military victory of one side or another. Negotiated peace settlements, on the other hand, including those brokered by the international community have tended to be less robust and have been less likely to install a durable democracy<sup>47</sup>.

This might seem to support the ‘give war a chance’ case made by both conservative and critical realists<sup>48</sup>, who have made critiques of humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding. But how helpful is it to characterise the conflicts in countries like Somalia, the DRC and previously Liberia as ‘sites of innovations and reordering’<sup>49</sup>? Should their warring parties have been left to fight their disputes through to a bloody conclusion? Should the international community have refrained

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<sup>46</sup> Analysts of transitions to democracy from military governance have long argued the need for democratic strategies towards military and security establishments. See in particular Stepan, (1988) pp x-xi. Stepan’s analysis is extended to war-to-peace as well as democratic transitions by Robin Luckham ‘Democratic Strategies for Security in Transition and Conflict’ and by Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham ‘Democratic Control and the Security Sector’ both in Cawthra and Luckham (eds) (2003), chapters 1 and 13.

<sup>47</sup> See Toft (2010), especially chapter 4, which presents the statistical findings. Interestingly there was no significant difference in development outcomes.

<sup>48</sup> Notably Luttwak, (1999), who begins as follows: ‘An unpleasant truth is that although war is a great evil, it does have a great virtue: it can resolve conflicts and bring peace’. Critical analysts like Duffield (2001: 130). The same argument is implicit in Chandler’s (2006) chapters 1-2 critique of international engagement. Toft (2010), however, does not see international engagement as inherently problematic, but simply suggests it should pay more attention to the nature and quality of the peace.

<sup>49</sup> Duffield (2010) p.6.

from intervening<sup>50</sup> or from supporting peace negotiations and peacebuilding in countries like Cambodia, Bosnia, Mozambique or Sierra Leone?

Whatever the imperial biases and operational shortcomings of peacebuilding, the case for leaving violent conflicts to play themselves out is ethically untenable and empirically no more sound. Conflict-torn countries cannot be viewed as if they were a random sample of independent cases exposed to the experimental treatments respectively of victory and of negotiated peace. Most conflicts are networked globally and regionally, attracting arms and combatants across national borders and exporting insecurity and violence to neighbouring states. Many are no longer in any meaningful sense internal or civil wars, which their neighbours or the international community can safely leave to run their course.

Moreover clear military outcomes tend to be possible only under special historical conditions, for instance where a well-organised military opposition is capable *both* of defeating the state *and* of enforcing a peaceful long-term political settlement. Negotiated peace agreements in contrast tend to be signed if there is a mutually hurting stalemate. It is hardly surprising that their political outcomes are more often contested and that hostilities are more liable to reignite.

Even when the odds might seem to be heavily stacked in favour of violence, this seldom means that there are no spaces at all for democratic dialogue and peaceful change. But well-focused democratic strategies are needed in order to make best use of whatever spaces for change war-to-peace transitions may create. These strategies would be democratic in at least three senses (a) in posing democracy as a feasible alternative to violent conflict (b) in applying the methods and concerns of democratic politics to security questions (c) in bringing security and the institutions charged with delivering it firmly under the control of democratic institutions, including legislatures, the media and civil society.

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<sup>50</sup> Indeed 'give war a chance' would not necessarily preclude international intervention, if the latter were to be backed with enough force to crush armed resistance and prevent its reemergence!



Democratic strategies would thus include but go well beyond current disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) agendas of the donor community. Like the latter they would prioritise democratic oversight of military, security and justice establishments<sup>51</sup>. And they would attempt to minimise violence and raise its costs, for instance by ensuring accountability for abuses of human rights<sup>52</sup>.

But democratic strategies can only be truly democratic if they reinterpret and indeed challenge the predominant global security and peace-building paradigms. They would also have to be rooted in struggles for peace, justice and democracy in each country's political and international context<sup>53</sup>. And they would have to hold global and regional as well as national decision-makers to account – especially so in countries like Afghanistan or the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where much of the insecurity stems from outside their own national boundaries.

Democratic strategies would necessarily require heavy doses of realism, including recognition of how security reforms may change balances of power and profit; hence may be opposed as well as supported by politically or militarily powerful interests, sometimes violently. They would build broadly based political coalitions among political activists, legislators, civil society bodies, rights organisations, security practitioners, researchers etc – and where feasible seek buy-in from military and security establishments and even members of non-state armed groups. At the same time they could not be considered as *democratic* strategies unless security transformations are explicitly geared to reinforcing legitimate authority, renewing public trust in government and assuring democratic accountability.

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<sup>51</sup> See Cawthra and Luckham (2003), chapter 13.

<sup>52</sup> In the short term there tends to be a fraught trade-off between holding the perpetrators of violence accountable and securing their buy-in to peace settlements. But accountability is essential if violence is to be delegitimized over the longer term.

<sup>53</sup> Luckham (2009), pp 1-10.

Such strategies cannot be conjured up in the abstract or imposed from outside. They not only demand proper understanding of particular national histories but also of shifting global and regional conditions. Hence they would need if possible to influence the major international players – not just as sources of assistance, but also as potential obstacles to a democratic strategy in their own right. They would have to allow for the complexities of regional interactions, where neighbouring countries may both support peace agreements and undermine them or both at the same time as in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. And they would require adequate policy responses to the networks of insecurity and flows of conflict-resources, arms, combatants, refugees etc, which spread violence across national borders. Their starting point would be the security dilemmas facing each individual country. But democratic strategies would ultimately have to involve regional and international cooperation, since the major sources of insecurity cannot be tackled by individual states acting on their own.

Some of the main historical trajectories ‘from’ violent conflict ‘to’ post-conflict political settlements are spelt out below. Each opens distinctive opportunities to create democratic strategies for peace and security. And each tends to throw up its own characteristic challenges.

*1. Post-war democratisation under external occupation.* The paradigm case of a post-war democratic strategy for security might seem to be the installation of liberal democracies in Germany, Austria, Italy and Japan following World War II. But it followed a script largely dictated by the victors and required immense investment in economic reconstruction under the Marshall Plan. It also came at a heavy political price, including the division of the world into military blocs, the arms race and the installation of national security systems at the heart of Western democracies themselves. Furthermore it brought civil war and authoritarian governance in its wake in the unsettled peripheries of the Cold War such as Greece, Korea, Vietnam and others.

*2. Enforced ‘regime change’ in the context of continuing war and occupation,* notably in Afghanistan and Iraq post 9/11. The major issue is that liberal democratic institutions have been implanted in a context of deep social polarization and armed

resistance, rather than embraced by war-weary citizens as in most of post-war Western Europe. Rather than institutionalizing democracy, occupation has delegitimized the state along with the occupiers; and it has embedded violence at the very heart of the political process.

The priority given security and anti-terrorism has left the narrowest of political spaces for democratic politics. Neither democratic constitution-making nor elections have brought **legitimacy** to public authority<sup>54</sup>, being unlikely to do so without more tangible improvements in security and livelihoods. Protracted occupation has tainted democracy with an imperial stigma, boosting political Islam and religious sectarianism. Whilst in Iraq democratic institutions of a sort have eventually gained some traction, they remain fragile, lacking in public support and unable to resolve sectarian conflicts. In Afghanistan democracy remains hostage to a deteriorating security situation as well as a corrupt and increasingly illegitimate elected government.

A democratic strategy for security would thus find itself heavily constrained from all sides. It would require credible plans to end occupation on terms determined by national stakeholders and not dictated by the internationals. Yet it would equally need to ensure that power did not simply fall into the hands either of corrupt and discredited governing elites or of armed opposition groups with narrow religious or sectarian agendas. Neither of these would be legitimate in a highly polarized political arena; and neither could be counted on to bring an end to violence and create an inclusive peace. Power-sharing would be essential (and is on the cards in both Iraq and Afghanistan), including the integration in one form or another of members of armed resistance groups into electoral politics, the civil administration and military, police and security institutions. But power-sharing could not by itself guarantee peace and stability without addressing fundamental issues about the legitimacy of state institutions and their capacity to deliver public goods including security to citizens.

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<sup>54</sup> See for instance Olivier Roy's (2004) incisive analysis of the absence of legitimacy in both countries and its damaging consequences along with the interesting account of the vicissitudes of democratisation Afghanistan in Tadjbakhsh and Schoiswohl (2008).

3. *Post-war democratisation under international trusteeship*, under UN Missions or other forms of international administration, as in Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, East Timor and others. International trusteeship differs from foreign occupation not only because it is officially blessed by the international community, but more crucially also because it has had the assent of most if not necessarily all citizens. And although there have normally been unresolved security issues including some armed violence, international administrations have mostly not had to contend with protracted armed resistance.

Even so the appropriateness of international trusteeship is sharply contested. Some policy analysts have contended that only long-term sharing of sovereignty with the international community can put failed and failing states on their feet<sup>55</sup>. Critics on the other hand have argued that trusteeship has merely reversed the hard won gains of national independence without delivering tangible improvements in security or development. Direct forms of empire, they argue have merely been replaced by the new strategic complexes of liberal peace, formed through shifting alliances among international agencies, IFIs, bilateral donors, international NGOs and peacekeeping forces<sup>56</sup>.

Nevertheless there has often been genuine local as well as international support for democratization, including elections and broad-based constitutional settlements. This support has not necessarily extended to the reform of existing security and justice institutions, given their legacy of repression and injustice. More fundamentally democratisation under external trusteeship has still tended to raise serious questions over national ownership and about who ultimately benefits.

International decision-makers have tended to deal with security issues as primarily technical. In some cases this has led to them being outmanoeuvred. In

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<sup>55</sup> One of the most explicit statements of this view is by Krasner (2004).

<sup>56</sup> See Duffield (2001), pp 13-15 and 31-34. The arguments against international trusteeship are challengingly formulated by Chandler (2006), whose *Empire in Denial* draws upon research on international trusteeship in the Balkans and Bosnia in particular.

others it has prevented difficult but essential political decisions from being made. In Cambodia, for example, the UN organised elections and supervised constitution-making, but left the former communist party entrenched in the security apparatus, enabling it to seize control of the new 'democracy' after the UN had departed. In Bosnia and Kosovo international intervention ended the fighting, but froze the underlying conflict under unworkable power-sharing constitutions, perpetuating the international presence. In East Timor the UN turned a blind eye to unresolved tensions, which almost destroyed what had been regarded as a peace-building 'success story'.

Even in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where international trusteeship is generally regarded as having facilitated genuine, if still shaky, war-to-peace and democratic transitions, there are still many unresolved issues. These include the incomplete reintegration of former combatants, weak democratic oversight of security institutions, the role of external actors (like DyneCorp, the corporation overseeing the reconstruction of the Liberian armed forces) and the legitimacy of non-state security and justice provision – all key issues for a democratic strategy towards the security sector.

*4. Democratisation written into internationally facilitated peace settlements.* In some conflict-torn countries the international community has confined itself to brokering rather than enforcing peace agreements; and to encouraging rather than directly orchestrating democratic reforms, as under the Contadora Peace Process in Central America, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan or the war-to-peace and democratic transitions in Mozambique and Burundi<sup>57</sup>. Each progressed through multiple non-official as well as official channels, and engaged a wide range of international, regional and national stakeholders. This diversity of actors and approaches played a part in their success and facilitated well-considered and widely based approaches to democratization.

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<sup>57</sup> Whilst both countries had UN Missions, these did not amount to long-term international trusteeship.

Yet the record of internationally brokered peace agreements is distinctly patchy. Some have only paved the way to renewed hostilities, as in Angola following the abortive elections in 1992, in Liberia post-1997 or Sri Lanka post-2003. And where peace processes are deemed to have ‘succeeded’, they may sometimes have achieved little more than fragile and contested truces, as with the 2000 Lusaka Accord and the string of agreements following it which gradually stabilised the DRC and paved the way to national elections in 2006 and the formation of a rickety coalition government<sup>58</sup>.

In certain cases the international community’s own faulty implementation has been partly to blame, as with Angola’s premature 1992 national elections held before combatants had been fully demobilised. In other cases, notably the DRC, the efforts of an under-resourced and incoherent international community have been stalled by the vested interests of a multiplicity of armed groups, interventions by neighbouring countries, a confused multiplicity of political players, the sheer complexity of the issues, and the long-standing breakdown of order throughout the country. Even Sudan’s more robust Comprehensive Peace Agreement hangs in the balance, neither assuring sustainable peace and genuine democratic reform in the North, nor resolving the vexed issues likely to arise from the impending 2011 referendum on the independence of the South.

*5. State-enforced peace and potentially democratic reform following military and political defeat of armed rebellions.* In such cases the narratives of democracy tend to be dictated by the state, and to chime in with the narratives of state security. The Sri Lanka government’s recent conclusion of its military campaign against the LTTE is the most recent example of state-imposed ‘democratic peace’. But the triumphalism of victory has largely trumped national reconciliation and there is little or no acknowledgement of the need for more inclusive governance and democratic reform – despite the recent announcement of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The power and prerogatives of the state and of its security establishments have simply been reasserted. It is far from certain whether there will be any real effort to reach

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<sup>58</sup> Prunier (2009), chapter 9.

out to the Tamil minority, redress human rights abuses, restore lost press and media freedoms and establish more inclusive forms and practices of democracy.

In Angola Jonas Savimbi's death and the subsequent collapse of the UNITA rebellion in 2002 opened political spaces for reform, including UNITA's reinvention as a political party. Nevertheless the regime's authoritarian power structures have remained largely intact, still firmly controlling the large rents accruing from oil (and now diamonds, which previously financed UNITA's military campaigns), which fund large-scale corruption, as well as the state's large military and security apparatus.

Both Angola and Sri Lanka might indeed learn lessons from Nigeria, where the Federal Military Government followed up its 1967-71 Civil War with a low-key but remarkably successful policy of national reconciliation – although its cumbersome and protracted 'return to democracy' was soon terminated by a further military coup.

Yet it is hard to see where the initiative for a democratic strategy towards security might come from, and how it might overcome government obstruction and disinterest. Any leverage donors might have enjoyed, especially on security reforms, has been diminished by the government's decision to wage war to a successful conclusion. Civil society organisations may have been active in pressing for human rights, national reconciliation and political reforms, especially in Sri Lanka; but they have been marginalised and sometimes actively suppressed by elected but highly controlling governments.

*6. Revolutionary peace and a new democratic order brought into being by successful armed insurrections against authoritarian regimes, as in Sandinista Nicaragua, Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda. In principle these should be fruitful terrain for democratic strategies towards security. Partly because the struggles against authoritarianism themselves challenged the prevailing theory and practice of security. And partly because the new regimes emerging from these struggles have often laid claim to the mantle of democracy, especially after the end of the Cold War had delegitimized alternative socialist models.*



Yet the commitment of such post-revolutionary regimes to democracy, including democratic accountability of their security establishments, has mostly not matched these expectations. Sandinista Nicaragua's participatory democracy was destabilised during the 1980s by the United States but also undermined through its own internal contradictions<sup>59</sup>.

The post-war regimes in Uganda, Ethiopia, and Rwanda skilfully deployed the dominant narratives of political and economic liberalization to attract substantial donor support. All three countries have followed their own routes to national reconciliation – the gacaca or community courts in Rwanda are a much-cited example. All three countries have managed to reinvent themselves as development and governance success stories – in striking contrast to Eritrea, which emerged from a similar revolutionary matrix following an initially similar strategy of liberalization, which was completely abandoned during its border war with Ethiopia.

It has become ever clearer that the commitment of such post-revolutionary regimes to liberalization has been mostly instrumental. Forms of democratic governance have been adopted with little corresponding transformation of power relations, which remain dominated by the state-building agenda and commandist politics of the original post-revolutionary elite<sup>60</sup>. Multiparty competition has been suppressed or marginalised in varying degrees; civil and political liberties have come under attack; and civil society organizations have had their activities limited put under surveillance, notably in Ethiopia.

What has counted greatly in their favour has been their apparent capacity to stabilise previously insecure and divided countries and to re-launch them on the path of development (not unlike the Hun Sen regime in the rather different circumstances of negotiated transition in Cambodia). Theirs have been primarily state-building projects, legitimized by decorations of democracy and good governance. They have engaged with the donors' security sector reform

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<sup>59</sup> See Luckham (1998).

<sup>60</sup> A prescient analysis of these trends can be found in Ottaway (1999),

programmes, partly in order to restructure their military, security and justice establishments, but mainly in order to keep donor funding flowing in. Their interest in democratic accountability has been limited and there has been little interest in alternative approaches to security that might address the deep social, regional and ethnic divisions, which could still undermine their developmental achievements. Civil society bodies taking up security or human rights issues have come under surveillance and have found their activities increasingly constrained<sup>61</sup>.

*7. Peace and national reconciliation negotiated directly between liberation or revolutionary movements and outgoing regimes, reinforced by broad-based democratic reforms.* Post-apartheid South Africa and (to a certain extent) Namibia and potentially the current transition in Nepal (though still held back by the disputes between Maoist former rebels and other contenders for power) are the most obvious examples.

The struggle against apartheid differed from some other armed insurrections in that democracy was a central demand from the very beginning. Armed struggle took place in tandem with popular mobilization by a great variety of civil society groups; and brought about an essentially political victory in the context of military stalemate. Negotiations between the ANC and the outgoing government were process-driven and aimed at developing a workable consensus, based on extensive consultation with citizens, including the creation of a new democratic Constitution.

This process of democratization included a major restructuring of the country's security framework, including the integration of former MK fighters into the renamed South African National Defence Force, revitalised mechanisms for democratic and parliamentary control, and an extensive review of the country's

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<sup>61</sup> In Ethiopia, for instance, a new law on NGOs has been used to close down all NGOs with more than 10% external funding engaged in democracy, governance, human rights or security programmes, including in particular an NGO, which has played a leading role developing a democratic approach to security issues throughout the Horn of Africa.

entire security framework, placing the emphasis firmly on human and citizen not just state security<sup>62</sup>.

The South African paradigm has been widely used as the reference point for security sector transformation elsewhere. In particular it has provided an implicit policy template for most donor security sector reform programmes – despite the key difference from the latter that in South Africa reform was internally generated and firmly anchored in a wider process of fundamental democratization. Yet the security transformation, though profound, has never delivered all that it promised, and has had to deal with corruption related to defence contracts, the failure of the police and justice systems to cope with crime, public indifference and growing lack of accountability and transparency<sup>63</sup>. Democratic strategies for security remain (as elsewhere) very much work in progress.

*8. Peace-building, state-building and construction of democracy from below with minimal inputs from the international community.* The outstanding example remains Somaliland, where peace negotiations linked to a renegotiation of the state itself in the form of a new democratic compact with citizens have had a uniquely innovative potential<sup>64</sup>. In Somaliland two special conditions have made such as renegotiation possible. Political space was opened through the delegitimation and indeed disappearance of the previous Somali state. And Somaliland was largely left alone by the international community, and so never became the focus of counterproductive international efforts to impose peace and reconstruct the state as in the rest of Somalia.

Yet it was the people of Somaliland themselves and their clan elders, women's groups, militia leaders etc, who negotiated a durable peace. The constitution-making

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<sup>62</sup> Described by Gavin Cawthra, 'Security Transformation in Post-Apartheid South Africa' in Cawthra and Luckham (2003).

<sup>63</sup> See Seegers (2010)

<sup>64</sup> See Leonard (2009).

process, which established a framework for democratic governance, grew out of these negotiations. The process was not without problems, including a lengthy and costly cantonment of fighters, and the somewhat patriarchal character of the compact, reliant as it is on the mediating role of clan elders. The ultimate product is a constitution, which reproduces many key features of liberal democracy, whilst giving constitutional form to an internally agreed democratic consensus. But the lack of international and African Union recognition along with the violence elsewhere in Somalia, are becoming serious obstacles to the long-term consolidation of the country's democratic peace.

What can be concluded from this brief survey of democratic strategies for security under different trajectories of war-to-peace transition? These transitions have not all led in the same direction. Nor have they necessarily brought about democracy, still less established democratic oversight over security. 'Democracy by force'<sup>65</sup>, especially external force, tends to lead down a violent path, in which democratization easily becomes hostage to security concerns. These security concerns tend in turn to be compounded by absence of legitimacy, all the more under external intervention or occupation.

Security and sometimes the use of force are unavoidable. Democratic governance - indeed any kind of governance - is enormously difficult in conditions of widespread violence. 'Security first' tends to be the nostrum of state-builders. Yet security should never be pursued on its own without regard to legitimate authority and inclusive peace-building. It should be built from within rather than imposed forcibly from the outside.

The reality, however, in many post-conflict situations is that the openings for change are very limited. This means there is all the more need for democratic strategies for security to make use of these political spaces. Their fundamental principle is that even where force is necessary it should reinforce not replace negotiation and democratic consent and accountability. Moreover this yardstick should be applied consistently to all who deliver security or create insecurity – be they governments,

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<sup>65</sup> The phrase is Karin Von Hippel's (2000).

security forces, non-state militias, arms suppliers, peacekeepers, intervention forces, donors or international NGOs.

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